

## Be warm weather wise.

Take some simple steps to stay fit and healthy in warm weather.

### Protect your skin.

- Contrary to popular belief, getting a sun tan may not be healthy at all. The more exposure to the sun, the greater the chances of getting skin cancer. So it's best to not get too much sun.
- When going outdoors, expose your skin to sunlight gradually. Wear a hat in bright sunlight. When in the sun for more than fifteen minutes, use sun screen (at least SPF 15) every time, even when tan.
- For questions about skin cancer, contact the American Cancer Society at 722-8480.

### Protect your eyes.

- The sun's ultraviolet rays can damage your eyes. It's a good idea to wear sun glasses, especially when sunbathing.
- Wearing wide-brimmed hats shades your eyes from the sun, as well as your head and neck.

### Preserve bodily fluids.

- Drinking plenty of water is a good way to avoid fluid loss, which can make you feel tired and sluggish. Serious fluid loss can even make you sick. Drink plenty of liquids when hot, but not alcoholic beverages, which increase fluid loss. Lightweight clothing, long-sleeved shirts and pants give added protection against fluid loss.



## Safe and Healthy Communities

Spring/Summer 2000

A Department of Health advisory for Rhode Island Cities and Towns

Warmer months are a great time to go outside and take in the sun. Enjoy! But become outdoor savvy. Being outdoor savvy means two things:

- Avoid mosquito bites.
- Be warm weather wise.

## Avoid mosquito bites.

What you can do  
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## Be warm weather wise.

Protect your skin.  
Protect your eyes.  
Preserve bodily fluids.

## Avoid mosquito bites.

You know they'll turn up once the weather stays warm. But mosquitoes can be more than just an annoyance. They can carry disease. Rhode Island faces threats from mosquitoes like the West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis, which makes it all the more necessary to avoid mosquitoes.

- West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) are mosquito-transmitted diseases that can result in serious illness. WNV appeared in New York City in the summer and fall of 1999, where 62 human cases (including 7 deaths) occurred.
- If WNV appears in the northeast, it will be during the May to October period, when mosquitoes are active. Infected birds migrating northward in the spring may reintroduce the virus to the northeast.
- Humans can only contract WNV from the bite of an infected mosquito. Several types of mosquitoes in Rhode Island can transmit WNV from birds to humans. The most common one is the "house mosquito," found almost everywhere in Rhode Island.

### What you can do

- Reduce the mosquito populations on your property by eliminating the water that collects in containers such as buckets, tires, boats, unused swimming pools, and clogged rain gutters. Mosquitoes don't travel far. Cleaning up your property protects you and your neighbors.

### Personal precautions

- Some common sense measures that help you avoid mosquito bites include:
  - 1) Repair window screens.
  - 2) Use bug repellent with DEET and follow directions.
  - 3) Wear long sleeved shirts and pants.
- Repellents containing "DEET" are very effective. Products containing DEET in excess of 30% are unnecessary and can irritate the skin. Repellents containing DEET should not be used on infants and used with caution on children.

### Community response

- The Department of Environmental Management works with local communities to control mosquitoes. Eliminating mosquito larvae (the immature aquatic stage) is the most effective action a community can take. Larval control programs conducted throughout the season will reduce the possibility of WNV appearing later in the season.

### Where to learn more

- Mosquito questions: Dept. of Environmental Management at 1-800-482-7878, and [www.state.ri.us/DEM](http://www.state.ri.us/DEM)
- Health questions: Dept. of Health at 1-800-942-7434, and [www.health.state.ri.us](http://www.health.state.ri.us)

Check out the West Nile Virus Website, a cooperative effort of HEALTH & DEM